

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Christian Journal of Opinion

Protestant-Roman Catholic Dialogue

This journal has given considerable attention for several years to the problem of Protestant-Catholic relations. Most of our articles on this subject and all of our editorials have been written by Protestants. It now seems appropriate to have the views of Roman Catholics at first hand. In this issue we are presenting three articles by outstanding Roman Catholics. They have written frankly about how Protestantism appears to them, about sources of tension and about their experience, as Catholics, of American institutions.

Father Weigel is the leading American Catholic authority on Protestant theology. His review of the first volume of Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology* is regarded by many Protestants as one of the finest discussions of that book in print. He has written a volume on Protestant thought in a similar spirit.

Professor O'Dea, a sociologist, read the article we are publishing to a group made up chiefly of Protestants. It was regarded as so fair and illuminating by those who heard it that they called for its publication.

Mr. Clancy has long been known to us as one of the fairest and most knowledgeable interpreters of the problems that cause controversy between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Some of our readers may remember his remarkable letter in our correspondence columns (Oct. 27, 1958) concerning the controversy over birth control.

These writers all presuppose the fact that American Roman Catholicism has entered a new stage in which it is no longer the religion of immigrant groups struggling for acceptance and opportunity in this country. Father Weigel and Professor O'Dea both stress the extent to which the struggle of these

new Americans has been responsible for the curious combination of chauvinistic Americanism and separatism that has added much bitterness to Protestant-Roman Catholic relations.

That Catholics have "arrived" is a matter of fact, and we believe that Protestants are coming to accept this and to recognize that this is a religiously pluralistic country and not a Protestant one. One symbol of the social and political arrival of American Catholics is Senator Kennedy, who is making a serious bid for nomination as a presidential candidate. (Protestants, we trust, may be permitted to hope that this arrival has not gone so far that a political party may be punished successfully for *not* nominating a Roman Catholic!) This social and political arrival of Catholics has been paralleled in part by a greater intellectual articulateness and maturity, though Catholic self-criticism on this matter suggests that this is a much slower development.

This new status of Roman Catholicism often arouses fears among Protestants. Catholics themselves should fully realize that a large and well-organized Roman Catholic majority in an American city is difficult for non-Catholics to live with! They should also realize, as some of them do, that traditional Roman Catholic teaching about the degree of religious liberty that would be granted to non-Catholics in a nation decisively controlled by Catholics remains a cause for worry. In past issues we have discussed the efforts of Catholic theologians to develop a doctrinal basis for religious liberty. These three Catholic writers understand this problem fully.

Professor Oscar Cullmann in a recent lecture to Protestants and Catholics in New York empha-

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sized the fact that in several European countries there is a genuine religious dialogue between the theologians of both confessions. Between them there is a degree of Christian solidarity that is unheard of in this country. When will the time be ripe for the beginning of such a dialogue in this country?

We know that there remain serious causes of tension and that they need to be discussed with frankness by the representatives of both faiths. *Christianity and Crisis* has discussed such concrete issues as birth control, parochial schools, etc. in the past and will continue to do so; they cannot be dodged. But we need to get beyond these issues, beyond even the problems of living together in a religiously pluralistic society and discuss elements of our common faith.

It is revealing that we speak of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism as two faiths. This may have a proper sociological basis, but surely it is theologically inadequate even though there are theological differences that make it impossible to conceive of a union of Protestants and Roman Catholics into one church.

Father Weigel speaks with some hope of Pope John XXIII's initiative in calling an ecumenical council. Such a council cannot include Protestants, and it cannot be expected to have any ecclesiastical results so far as Protestant-Roman Catholic relations are concerned. But Pope John has been a surprise to Protestants—and probably to many Catholics as well. There are overtones in what he has said and done that may at least create a more favorable climate for the dialogue that we and our Roman Catholic writers desire. J. C. B.

GENEVA: PREFACE AND PROBLEMS

THE FOREIGN MINISTERS' conference in Geneva, presumably preparing for a summit meeting, confronts two related problems: Berlin and the unification of Germany.

The Berlin problem seems insoluble—so insoluble in fact that one wonders why our policymakers were stupid enough to place a democratic city in the heart of Soviet territory. Despite wartime sentimentality, they must have known that a military alliance with an incompatible partner would not outlast the defeat of the foe, fear of whom had created the alliance. Did none of our policymakers read the plain lessons of history?

The German problem is tentatively soluble by

the simple expedient of keeping Germany divided. This is an outrageous solution, for the union of this great nation must ultimately be achieved. Yet the division of Germany is tentatively the only solution and this is partly because the nations of the West, for various reasons, do not really desire the union. The Russians know this, and this is one reason why they precipitated the current crisis.

Another reason for the continued division is that there is no way of uniting Germany without imperiling the strategic securities of either side. Our package proposal, looking forward to a Germany unified through free elections, would rob Russia of the linchpin of her eastern empire. We must have known that our proposal was as unacceptable to the Russians as their proposal to isolate Berlin as a "free city" is unacceptable to us. Either proposal seriously alters the strategic realities of Europe to the disadvantage of the opposing party.

Incidentally, no one in the West except de Gaulle has proposed the recognition of the Oder-Neisse line as the permanent boundary of Germany. Why only de Gaulle? The boundary certainly cannot be altered without a war. The acceptance of the permanence of the line would be a mighty step toward disengagement, for it would tend to free the restive Poles from the Russian domination they must now accept as the price of their own security.

One suspects that if the unification of Germany were the only issue, the Geneva conference would reach an accord: to keep Germany divided while paying lipservice to the goal of her ultimate unification. This solution might be palatable to the West because the Soviet part of Germany is losing about 1,000,000 inhabitants a year to prosperous West Germany. The attrition of one of the Germanys is one way of reaching slow unification.

But the problem of the city of Berlin is more serious. Russia cannot abide this thorn in her side, and we cannot sacrifice Berlin without a catastrophic loss of prestige, not only in Europe but throughout the world. We also would sacrifice our moral self-respect somewhat in the fashion of the loss of self-respect in the West after Munich. But what is the solution?

Walter Lippmann has suggested that the United Nations guarantee the security of a free Berlin. Lippmann is a wise and eminent guide in international relations, but this proposal is fantastic

for the simple reason that the United Nations is not a super-government, but only a minimal bridge between Russia and the West. The Russian veto would make any UN security for Berlin an illusion. Lippmann's analogy of the Vatican City security under international guarantee reveals the hazards of all historical analogies: they are too inexact. What strategic issues were involved in giving the Roman Catholic Church a little island of sovereignty in Italy?

Perhaps the Geneva conference will find a solution for this insoluble problem. We are not going to add to the confusion by offering another alternative solution.

Despite the present insolubility of these strategic

problems, both the Geneva conference and an ultimate summit meeting are important. They are stages in the accommodation in attitudes on both sides toward the difficulties of competitive co-existence and an acceptance by each side of two obvious but easily obscured facts.

One is that neither side really wants to begin the ultimate conflict. The other is that neither side will sacrifice great strategic advantages for the "easing of tensions." We must be prepared to live in tension for a long time, meanwhile hoping that all forms of cultural exchange and all kinds of conferences will create a minimal sense of community over the great chasm of hostility that divides Russia and the West.

R. N.

Inside American Roman Catholicism

GUSTAVE WEIGEL, S. J.

AN EDITOR of a Protestant journal of opinion recently stated that one of the current tasks facing a Protestant religious journalist is to tell American Protestants that America is no longer a Protestant country. Whether Protestants have to be informed of this fact may possibly be debated but the fact itself cannot be. Yet no one will draw the illegitimate conclusion that America is already or is becoming a Roman Catholic land. Percentage-wise, the Roman Catholic Church has not grown much in the last forty years.

But in this land of many religious minorities how are we to interpret the Roman Catholic reality? Sociological studies have been made but the limitations and detachment with which such studies are produced rarely shed great light on the lived existence of the Roman Catholic collectivity. An investigation must be made from the inside. Yet this is a difficult task. There certainly is something that can be called a collective consciousness of the total group, but to get at it one must rely on an individual consciousness that is hopelessly hemmed in by its own individuality. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to make an attempt at investigation even under such precarious conditions.

An American Catholic Church

Aristotle wanted definitions to be derived from genus and differentiae. The American Roman Catholic Church is therefore a Roman Catholic church

and different from all other Roman Catholic churches because it is American. This may seem to say little, but actually it says much. Differences are not accidentals tacked on to the genus. They suffuse it totally.

There is no call here to describe generic Catholicism. Our effort will be directed to the American differentiae. The American component of American Catholicism obviously entered into it by way of history. Into a land staked off as the claim of Protestant groups, the Catholic intruded. This intrusion came not as a single blow but in a steady flow over 150 years. By and large the Catholic came either as a non-English speaker or as an Irishman. In either case he was culturally alien to the British possessors of the land. Religiously he was not only different but suspect.

Whether we like it or not, Protestants and Catholics are inevitably related to each other by the concept of opposition, and the opposition is stronger the nearer we approach the moment of the split of one from the other. Today we are all striving manfully to overcome the sense of opposition, but we are descendants of the past and history works in all of us.

The first Catholics, therefore, walked into a hostile environment. This does not mean that there were barbarous persecutions or gross inhumanity. The persecutions were petty and the individual Catholic could and did avoid them either through personal friendship with individual Protestants or by taking refuge in a ghetto built by himself and his kind.

The immigrating Catholics were also, in gen-

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eral, poor folk escaping from the hardships proper to lower social classes of Europe. They did not bring with them much learning nor even a great awareness of the good of learning. The capital the Catholic brought with him was his will to improve his secular condition and his readiness to work hard in his attempts. Those who did not have this capital returned to their lands of origin or soon died.

As the English know, America, in spite of its English roots, is not England. It is a new thing with subtle power. The American Dream, or whatever we wish to call it, had (and pray God that it still has!) a transforming power that it infused into its own, making them one. The European Catholics who came to America became American. The result was that the Catholicism they brought with them became American as well.

It was not done without growing pains. Some of the Europeans of the 19th century did not want an American Catholic Church but a confederation of European Catholic churches on American soil. They were led by German spokesmen, but World War I showed the Americans of German stock that they themselves were Americans and not Germans. The whole American Catholic Church suddenly became aware of itself as Catholic and American and has never since lost that awareness.

From 1918 onwards, Roman Catholicism in America took on a new vitality because of its own achieved identification. The result was that any clear-eyed observer could see that the American Catholic Church was a power and a force in the land. It was no longer struggling to survive or to be accepted. It had "arrived."

However, the effects of its earlier history showed up clearly. There was a sudden pride of achievement that was more adolescent than mature. Catholicism became cocky and would tolerate no criticism from within or without. Where it could, it "threw its weight around." The older fear and resentment toward Protestants now turned into smug, but edgy, aloofness. One could almost hear the American Catholics say: "You have had your day; now we have ours."

The pain and distress involved in the Al Smith campaign of 1928 was a salutary and chastening experience. Even if America was not religiously Protestant, it was by no means pro-Catholic. In consequence, a more objective self-examination slowly spread over the group. Catholics began to criticize themselves and did so with a candor that should have amazed non-Catholics—but they did not even notice.

The basic weakness inherent in the Catholic

community was its lack of scholarship. It had loyalty, organization and numerical strength but it had too little intellectualism, in spite of its growing educational system built laboriously by the Catholics without outside aid. This weakness could not become conscious until a sufficient number of American Catholic intellectuals were formed; and they were being formed in the '30s and '40s. The result is that voices have been since heard and embarrassment felt. However, these things are themselves the first steps of coming improvement.

At the present moment, the American Catholic Church is neither a harassed minority nor a beligerent group. It is more prone to conservatism than radical change. Its tendency is toward American chauvinism rather than anything anti-American. It is rather contemptuous of what is foreign, even when visible in the Catholic Church elsewhere. Its generosity, activism and optimism are probably more American than Catholic.

Ignorance of Protestantism

One thing American Protestants must recognize, though they are slow to do so, is that American Catholics are no threat to them, nor do they wish to be. The diminution of Protestant power understandably makes Protestants nervous, but there is no ground in Catholicism for their nervousness.

The American Catholics do not consider Protestantism as their great preoccupation nor do they pay much attention to it. They arrange their own affairs and conversations with little or no concern for the Protestant dimension of our country. At times they are faced with certain movements that have a nuisance value, as for example the Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, that Catholics fortunately do not identify with the Protestant community. (In fact, it must be embarrassing for many Protestants to see this group use in its proper name a label that is so much bigger than it and that means something better than the POAU movement.) However, in general the American Catholics do not define themselves or their activities in terms of Protestant reference.

This attitude, besides the advantage of eliminating maintained hostility for Protestantism, also has a palpable disadvantage. Although American Catholics have many friends and relatives who are Protestants, yet they know so little about Protestantism and show no great desire to know more. It would almost be true to say that the American Catholics, in constant amicable relationships with

Protestants, ignore Protestantism. They are not curious to find out the doctrines of Protestantism, nor its ways of worship and structure. It is not clear in their minds what distinguishes an Episcopalian from a Methodist. Luther vaguely means something, but Lutherans are supposed to be undifferentiated Protestants with a German background. The multitude of the more angular, smaller denominations simply confuses the Catholic without stimulating him to clarify his confusion.

In such a situation the American Catholic is totally unprepared for ecumenical dialogue, though this is the task that our moment calls for. There is no Catholic hostility to ecumenism. There is just a great ignorance of what it is and why it is important.

Some few voices have been raised in American Catholic circles pointing sympathetically to the ecumenical movement, and they have been heard. But they have not made a deep or wide impact. Perhaps the few Catholic ecumenists will manage

to arouse great interest in their work, and there are signs that the young Catholics, clerical and lay, are waking up to its importance. However, as of the moment not much is being accomplished. The American Catholic makes his own the principle lately enunciated by Professor Oscar Cullmann—that Catholicism and Protestantism are irreconcilable. But unlike Cullmann, the American Catholic does not see that much must yet be done in Christian charity.

The electoral campaign of 1960 is already aborning. The presence of Senator John Kennedy among the possible candidates will produce intranquility. In God's goodness it may be the occasion for Catholic ecumenical action. Perhaps it may even do the contrary.

Certainly the ecumenical council to be summoned by Pope John XXIII should produce some good fruits, at least in the world-wide preparations for the council sessions. Just now, with these possibilities before us, we must wait, hope and see.

The Ideologists and the Missing Dialogue

THOMAS F. O'DEA

OSCAR CULLMANN stated recently that the prerequisite for Protestant-Roman Catholic conversation is "complete openness." Actually this aim, achievable among some groups in Europe, is too high for American conditions. The best we can do is to work for a growing openness as we build some basis in mutual trust and friendship. Our bridges are very weak. They bear a warning—"Capacity: not too many tons"—and we are all quite good at implicitly reading such signs.

Thus, Protestant-Catholic dialogue in this country does not take place in an atmosphere of relaxation and interior freedom. It is usually characterized by a kind of distant and respectful restraint expressing a kind of etiolated good will. Only real and fairly continuous association can bring relaxation of such attitudes. While individuals achieve this, representative individuals in religious or semi-religious dialogue usually fall far short of it. And the two great religious bodies certainly do not attain anything like this.

One result of this general absence of Christian dialogue is that one receives the impression—rather a caricature of the facts—that the reciprocal atti-

tudes of the two groups are quite antagonistic. This impression arises from the statements and actions of the noisier elements on each side, who may be characterized loosely in terms of two identifiable groups.

Let us call them, for want of better terms, Catholic hyper-integralists and Protestant hyper-reformationists. Both find a marked satisfaction in carrying out, quite inappropriately in the contemporary setting, religious conflicts of the past. The source of this satisfaction deserves deep study. All that can be done here is to suggest some elements that must be included in any adequate hypothesis.

The Hyper-Integralists

The Catholic hyper-integralists want two incompatible things at once. They want some kind of Catholic ghetto and, at the same time, they seek to identify Catholicism with America and Americanism, understanding the latter especially in terms of right-wing political opinions. They see no need for any larger expression of Christian solidarity nor any useful end in genuine dialogue with Protestants or others about fundamental value-problems. Their viewpoint is an ideology in the sense that it displays a marked economy in relation to the ambiguities of reality. It is a set of stereotypes

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and is given to blacks and whites, rights and wrongs, for and against.

Ideologies are embraced because they serve some function—often implicit and unrecognized—for their adherents. They fulfill needs and allay anxieties.

Hyper-integralists suffer from two strains, both derived from their historical experience. They experience the defensiveness of all Christianity before the rapid secularization of culture. This is aggravated by the defensive posture that much of post-Tridentine Catholicism has inherited from the Counter Reformation.

Another closely related set of strains derives from the American Catholic experience. Immigration and assimilation were difficult processes for those involved, and they precipitated attitudes that did not simply fade away when the most palpable difficulties no longer existed. Catholics were not well received at first. This is a fact, one that Protestants perhaps do not ponder enough. Many of them were Irish and brought with them bitter memories of oppression by a Protestant ruling class in Ireland. Thus certain symbols and their attendant feeling tones are often differently experienced by Catholics and Protestants, who in fact may be equally "democratic."

Consequently Catholics as a group have developed a complex relationship to America, and the complexity lies precisely in areas not easily understood by the ordinary man. The American Catholic feels himself an American, wants to be and is glad he is an American, takes over American middle-class values and joins the social mobility merry-go-round alongside his Protestant fellows.

To the extent that he remains Catholic, he often finds it difficult to relate himself to some aspects of American culture, especially to intellectual areas of life that derive from a Protestant substrate and show pronounced secularization, and to other areas more closely related to Protestantism proper.

When Catholics become middle class they take over many of the general fears and anxieties of the middle class, fears of aggrandizement of other groups at their expense. Since Catholics derived recently from lower-class status, their new middle-class attitudes may involve some degree of guilt.

Moreover, since Catholic values have stressed social ethics, the new political and social attitudes may involve guilt on this score. The unevenly assimilated Catholic needs something to enable him to handle these problems, something to give him a new conception and legitimation of himself and to supply him with the basic security that is derived in less mobile societies from social solidarity

and tradition. This function is served by the ideology of hyper-integralism.

This is done by making a strident identification of Catholicism with America and Americanism, which also exorcises the heritage of the Enlightenment and its modern leftist derivatives. Not only is Catholicism equated with genuine Americanism, but secularism is rendered unAmerican, and criticism of bourgeois values becomes anti-American and anti-Catholic. America, the business system and the Catholic Church stand together, attacked by a common enemy. Their defense is a single task.

The earlier defensiveness invites a militant response and the bothersome problems—difficult to make explicit and to evaluate rationally—are translated into bogeys to be combatted. Thus a lot of anxiety-provoking problems are given some kind of formulation, and therapists tell us that any kind of definition offers a measure of relief. Furthermore, identification of the problems makes an attack upon them possible, albeit only a symbolic one. But the symbolic attack provides the self-definition that is needed and acts as a catharsis for built-up tensions.

Three marks of ideology may be distinguished: stereotyped oversimplification of reality, militancy and rigidity. The last reveals the presence of anxiety, and the presence of aggressiveness is an obvious response to strain. We have here a historically conditioned social and cultural syndrome involving displacement and projection. I do not mean that it is a neurosis in the individual sense, though in some cases it may be. It is an instance of social pathology.

The Hyper-Reformationists

The hyper-reformationists—the Protestant equivalents of the Catholics just described—also are reacting in terms of historical conditioning to contemporary strains. Protestants and Protestantism today are having to accept something less than the central and dominant position they have long had in American culture and society. The social mobility of other groups, among whom the Catholics are prominent, makes this the case.

Once securely identified with the core of American culture and society, Protestants now must move over a bit. That men do not move over graciously is one of the few undeniable generalizations from history. This adjustment is not yet clearly explicit in Protestant thinking, but the nudge is felt and is responded to.

When upsetting social developments, such as industrialization and urbanization, shook American

society in the 19th century, it was fairly standard for many Protestant groups to respond in terms of anti-Catholic clichés. The great and honorable tradition of Protest has had the unfortunate by-product of supplying the man in the street with a ready set of counters from Foxe's *Martyrs* and the "Black Legend" with which to organize experience. Such clichés serve similar purposes today.

Catholics are certainly nervous in the face of the rapid secularization of culture, but Protestants are, often enough, inundated by it. A curious aspect of this development, which does not aid the inner security of Protestant church groups, is that some secularized Protestants tend to identify Catholicism with the older orthodox tradition of Christianity, something certainly in no way encouraged by official Protestantism. When such people feel guilt—often not very consciously—for no longer believing what they were brought up to believe, they tend to project it outwards and to aggress Catholicism as the external visible surrogate of their former beliefs.

The hyper-reformationists see as their chief religious and civic task the carrying forward of the counter-Catholic aspects of the Reformation in today's world. In fact, the very weakening of their Protestantism by secularization makes them more and not less anti-Catholic for the reasons I have suggested, and also because it is the one aspect of the long and honorable tradition of the Reformation that is meaningful to them in their present situation.

More pressing problems such as the very problematic future of all religion in American culture do not bother them despite their close relation to rational Protestant interests. By saving America from "Catholic aggression," this ideology once again identifies Protestantism with America and symbolically reaffirms the older, central role of Protestantism in our society.

This is, in fact, a symbolic counter-attack against the social rise of Catholics and the inevitably concomitant increasing visibility and influence of Catholicism. In some cases at least, it is also a way of handling guilt over an older, abandoned Protestant orthodoxy. This ideology, too, shows itself as employing a truncating stereotyping and as exhibiting militancy and rigidity. Like its Catholic counterpart, it goes in heavily for verbal realism.

Reality and Fantasy

Some will object that there is certainly some truth in what hyper-reformationism says about

"Catholic authoritarianism," or in what hyper-integralism says about liberalism and Protestant "connivance" with secularism. Yes, of course. If they were not built upon some reality, ideologies would not serve their function. The real bases exist in the complicated social developments we have briefly indicated and in the real and important faith and value differences that exist between Catholics and Protestants.

The neurotic individual who reacts to his boss in terms of unsolved infantile problems in relation to his father does not imagine that his boss is an authority figure who creates problems for him. This is part of the real situation. What he does is to perceive this realistic element in a context derived from earlier and now inappropriate experiences. He adds unreal elements. In part he does this by schematizing the current situation in terms of the dimension of the earlier one. The perception is a distorted one and the reaction is overdetermined. In the same way, these ideologists respond to their present predicaments with older and now inappropriate organizing ideas and actions. In both cases this is a disguised way of handling anxieties, wishes and aggressions.

These ideologies provide for each group a simplified and manageable definition of the situations in which they find themselves. They provide the self-image needed in a time of rapid transition to replace the older conventional images and definitions now being rendered obsolete by social change. The plight of the individual in a progressively complicated society also finds some fantasy expression as do frustrations and aggressions of more purely personal origin.

It should be stressed that the anti-Romanism of the one and the anti-liberalism of the other are the sociological equivalents of the anti-Semitism of the German conservative classes who proved so vulnerable to Nazism. Why these ideologies appeal only to some elements among both religious groups and not to all is deserving of serious research. Undoubtedly some groups are more securely anchored in reality.

There are three reasons why I have considered at length these groups that are not representative of the typical Catholic or Protestant. First, they should not be underestimated; they are not a lunatic fringe. There are hard cores on both sides, and around them cluster all shades of affected opinion.

Second, these groups should be a problem to intelligent Catholics and Protestants. It is important that they do not come to act as foci for the crystallization of American opinion.

Third, these ideologies play an important part in structuring the framework in which a great deal of exchange of ideas takes place. The exchanges are often marked by considerable intensity. Issues like education, birth control, an ambassador to the Vatican, or a Catholic President arouse the hyper-reformationists.

Their Catholic counterparts are in fact likely to remain calmer and more rational on these issues, which they see more realistically and less symbolically. They tend to get triggered off by such symbolic counters as communism, which plays the role of master-symbol for many of them, criticism of the F.B.I. or Alger Hiss speaking at Princeton, over which a Catholic chaplain becomes so exercised. Some symbols are shared in common, and in local contexts any of the long list may become the catalyst to set things off.

Fortunately, these two ideologies are not organized around the same symbols, and their adherents do not face each other as two quite polarized groups reacting with equal intensity to the same issues. The loosely integrated character of American society and culture helps account for this fact.

It is ironical that neither group seems aware that both constitute striking examples of the secularization of their religious ethos. If the hyper-integralists see no inconsistency in championing a Catholicism that has centered its ethic upon *caritas* ("charity," cf. I Cor. 13) and, at the same time, in embracing Joseph McCarthy as a sterling defender of the cause, the hyper-reformationists see nothing anti-Protestant in the crude secularism of Paul Blanshard on so many ethical issues. Each confuses religion and secular nationalism in its own way.

Thus the hyper-integralists tend to merge loosely into rightist secular political groupings, a fact that reaffirms their Americanism for them. The hyper-reformationists also merge loosely, in some cases at least, with quite militant secularizers.

Certain conservative Protestant groups today appear to be taking up a line like the hyper-integralists. As recent events in the South have shown, the identification of conservative and defensive religion with right-wing causes is not a Catholic monopoly. Will the hyper-reformationists reconcile themselves with their Catholic equivalents on the basis of a secular rightism and find themselves combatting fellow Protestants?

Reality-Testing via Dialogue

An important effect of the existence of these ideologies is, as I have noted, that they tend to

define the universe of discourse for more moderate people. The result is a great lack of reality-testing about controversial issues. To give but one example: it is surprising to what a great extent the discussion of a possible Catholic President is marked by tenseness and lack of sense of proportion. The symbolic elements outweigh the real in the thinking of so many otherwise sensible people.

It seems clear to any political realist that no Catholic President would or could alter the American Constitution, either as a document or as a body of practices embodying and interpreting that document. Certainly this is one area where formal and informal control seems quite effective.

Indeed, anyone with an ounce of political shrewdness knows that the Catholic Church as a religious group would have far less influence upon a Catholic President than upon almost any other conceivable administration. The social controls are such that he would lean over backwards to avoid even the suggestion of influence. In France members of the clergy were much freer in approaching high government officials under distinctly secular cabinets than they were when MRP, a liberal Catholic party, had formed the government.

Every issue of this kind picks up connotations that find resonance in Catholic and Protestant souls, reactivating memories of our unfortunate and most unChristian history of fighting and persecuting one another—triggering off our often unconscious and, too often, equally unChristian anxieties about our present predicaments. These fore-shortened attempts to handle a reality we have not really faced are in fact an unwary abandonment of reality. Nonrational fears and aggressions replace Christian action: symbolic concerns replace real ones.

Reality-testing must be developed, but reality-testing is not an individual process. It is a social affair in which the slants of men with different perspectives partly correct and partly supplement each other, eliminating fantasy and enlarging the range of the real. It requires communication, the basis of which should exist in a common Christian heritage.

In isolation, each group finds it difficult to recognize in its own view the elements of fantasy and projection that creep in. That is why Protestant-Catholic dialogue is so important. It has already started in theological discussions and in biblical studies. There is much room for creative thinking in extending it. Only dialogue will deliver us from the spell of the ideologists.

A Roman Catholic View of American Protestantism

WILLIAM CLANCY

IF THERE BE a Christian commandment, it is surely the commandment of love. "By this," Jesus told us, "will all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." But if the standard of this commandment were strictly applied, we would find few "Christians" in any age. As for the situation in America today, Reinhold Niebuhr has accurately observed: "The relations between Catholics and Protestants in this country are a scandal and an offense against Christian charity."

The scandal of our Protestant-Roman Catholic relations may, of course, be inevitable. Only the Saints approach the sublimity of Christ's commandment of love. The rest of us are conditioned by our own prejudices, and all of us—Catholics and Protestants—are heirs to a four-hundred-year history of suspicion and, even, dislike. Looking at the relations of Catholics and Protestants in many parts of Europe, however, one would have to be a pessimist indeed to doubt that the situation in the United States could be improved.

"Coherence" vs. "Incoherence"

The editors of this journal have asked me to contribute a Roman Catholic's—a *particular* Roman Catholic's—view of American Protestantism. In thinking about this, I see again that objectivity comes hard. We are all (I repeat) conditioned by our own prejudices. For most Catholics, Protestantism is a peculiarly inexplicable phenomenon. And though many of my coreligionists may disagree with some things I say in this article, I think they will agree with this: for most Catholics, an ordered skepticism is easier to understand than Protestantism. Obviously this is not an easy or a pleasant fact for a Catholic to admit, especially when he is writing for a primarily Protestant audience. But it is true, and it indicates something profound about Catholic-Protestant difficulties.

James Joyce expressed this classically in a famous passage toward the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, where Stephen Dedalus (Joyce himself) tells his friend Cranly that he is abandoning Catholicism:

"Then—said Cranly—you do not intend to become a Protestant?"

"I said I had lost the faith—Stephen answered

—but not that I had lost self-respect. What kind of liberation would that be to forsake an absurdity which is logical and coherent and to embrace one which is illogical and incoherent?"

However arrogant this passage may sound to Protestants, I think they should realize that Joyce was here expressing something more profound than Catholic prejudice or Irish insularity. He was stating a conviction almost universally held among Catholics, that there is no alternative to the Church of Rome except disbelief. For most Catholics, Protestantism, with its innumerable divisions, seems at best compromise and at worst chaos. Our own concept of the Church, with its system and logic, its tradition and order, does not prepare us for sympathy with any version of Christianity less "certain" or more ambiguous than our own. We are apt to see in Protestantism a mere shadow-Christianity, the sad example of what happens once the objectivity of Catholic authority is overthrown.

I would not argue here whether this is good or bad, but it has important consequences for Catholic-Protestant relations on almost every level. Since Catholics tend to see Protestantism as mere negation, mere *anti-Catholicism*, they tend also not to take it seriously as a genuine *Christian* concern, even in the social and political orders. From this fact much of the religious misunderstanding in our pluralist society results.

One outstanding and discouraging fact about the Catholic-Protestant situation in America is that, on the popular level at least, most of our controversies are conducted on the level of caricature. The Protestant caricature of Catholicism is a monolith called "Romanism," which is authoritarianism pure and simple. The Catholic caricature of Protestantism is that mere negation, that compromise-Christianity, which it is so easy to dismiss. Because of these caricatures, Protestants approach Catholicism with unreasoning suspicion, and Catholics view Protestantism with fatuous condescension. Thus are the real issues between us evaded.

Both caricatures are obviously sins against charity and truth, and the first object of any Catholic-Protestant encounter should be to destroy them. But before this can be done, each group must admit, quite honestly, its own responsibility for creating and maintaining the caricatures. Catholics must take some of the blame for their own part in maintaining that "monolithic" caricature of the Church which they deplore. And Protestants must

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acknowledge their responsibility for presenting a spectacle of negativism and anti-Catholicism on the American scene.

I do not believe that Catholics generally have anything that approaches an adequate understanding of what Protestantism actually *is*. Most of them know only what it is *not*. And this is a major failure in Catholic education.

I recall my own education. It was in Catholic schools from the first grade through my master's degree, and I am most grateful for it. But I am not grateful for what it taught me—or, more accurately, for what it failed to teach me—about Protestantism.

In primary and secondary schools I learned the standard things, all negative: Protestants reject the authority of the Pope; they do not honor the Virgin Mary; they deny the efficacy of good works; they acknowledge only two sacraments, etc.. In the college that I attended I learned nothing more. (But the history department offered a two-semester course under the interesting title, "The Protestant Revolt and the Catholic Reformation.") Through eighteen years of Catholic education I heard nothing positive about Protestantism; no teacher ever suggested that, beyond the Reformation's negations, Protestantism has a prophetic vision of its own vocation. (I would note here my suspicion that, in the teaching of Roman Catholicism, Protestant schools do no better.)

If the religious situation in America is to improve, Catholics must understand—better than they have in the past—that Protestantism has its own unique genius, that it witnesses to some of the central truths of Christianity, that, at its best, it is moved by a special sense of God's awful majesty and a special jealousy for his sovereign rights. And Catholics can admit these things even though they must finally judge Protestantism to be separated from the Church's visible unity and doctrinally incomplete.

More than this, a Catholic can be thankful for the witness Protestantism bears to some aspects of Christian truth and the Christian vocation that, at various times in the Roman Church's history, may be obscured. I, for one, am grateful to Methodism for the witness it bears to the life-giving action of the Holy Spirit, and to Presbyterianism for its careful guarding of "the Crown Rights of the Redeemer"; I am grateful to Anglicanism for its deep sense of seemliness and order in worship, to Lutheranism for its emphasis on the grace of God, and to the Congregational Churches for their special awareness of the responsibility of the local

community of believers in the total life of Christianity. I am grateful to Protestantism generally for its devotion to the prophetic ministry of the Church.

God does work in mysterious ways, and the Catholic should see the hand of God in all these things. One of John Henry Newman's most moving letters was that in which he declared, after many years as a Catholic, that he would "never" attack the Anglican Church. How, he asked, can any Catholic attack a community in which so much of God's truth is proclaimed and so much evidence of God's grace is to be seen?

The faces of Protestantism in America are more various, probably, than in any other country; the various gifts of Protestantism are consequently more manifest here, too. I hope it will not seem ungracious of me to say that, because of this, Protestantism's special defects are perhaps more evident here than in any other place. What the American Catholic sees when he looks at Protestantism are often, unfortunately, those things about which Protestantism can be least proud: a narrow moralism, anti-Catholicism and what I would describe as a kind of crypto-Erastianism. (I would be the first to admit that, when he looks at Catholicism in America, the Protestant may well see evidence to confirm *his* worst suspicions of the Church of Rome: clerical paternalism and a philistine anti-intellectualism. But this is not the subject of my article.)

The Intellect vs. The Will

Theologically and historically, Protestantism and Catholicism are separated by disagreements that—except for Divine intervention—will probably never be healed. There will never be a Protestant Catholic Church, nor will there ever be a Catholic Protestant Church, at least in any sense that a Roman Catholic could admit. But of all the differences between the two traditions, few are more significant than the primacy each tradition assigns to the intellect and to the will.

The Catholic tradition stands eternally for the primacy of the intellect over the will, of the *logos* over the *ethos*; historic Protestantism has tended to be voluntaristic, to give primacy to the will. For a Catholic, goodness is for the sake of truth; for most Protestants, truth is for the sake of goodness. There seems little doubt that the intense moralism of modern Protestantism is a result of this ordering. The Protestant, almost by self-definition, is a "good" man; the Catholic, by self-definition, is a man who holds the truth.

I have no intention of discussing here the merits of either tradition, but both, obviously, have their effects in social and cultural life, and both have their temptations. If the natural temptation for the Catholic—with his assurance of “truth”—is an arrogant dogmatism, the natural temptation for the Protestant—with his concern for “virtue”—is a puritanical moralism. This is the temptation, I believe, to which a good portion of American Protestantism has succumbed, and because our culture is a predominantly Protestant culture, the American ethos has succumbed to it too.

This obviously is not something about which a Catholic has any right to complain. One cannot reasonably “blame” a culture for the way it has developed. What a Catholic does have a right to complain of, however, is the assumption among large numbers of American Protestants that their own version of morality—which a Catholic sees as a sectarian-puritan version—is in some way part of the American-way-of-life. There is a great irony in the fact that those Protestant groups that are most keen on “separation” of the Church and State and most worried about the Catholic “threat” to separation, are also the groups that would impose a Protestant ethos on the community through civil law, wherever possible. The absolute prohibition of drinking and gambling through civil legislation is, of course, the major example of this.

How is this achieved, this identification of a Protestant puritanism with Americanism itself, by men sincerely devoted to “separation” of Church and State? I suspect it is by what I have called a kind of crypto-Erastianism among many American Protestants. Historically, Protestants have often embraced an Erastian theory of Church-State identification. In this country they are, overwhelmingly, in favor of Church-State separation. In many cases, though, they seem to be in favor of separation as a weapon against “Rome.” They are for separation of the Church from what they still assume to be an implicitly Protestant State.

All this is, of course, on the level of emotion. It would not, could not, be defended rationally. But I think it is operative—and significantly operative—nonetheless. On the subconscious level many Protestants still think of the United States as *their* country and fight to keep it so. But they do not see this as a violation of separation: they are fighting to keep America “American,” by which they mean Protestant in its predominant mores and symbols.

I realize that I am here criticizing a phenomenon that is dying. The most responsible voices in Amer-

ican Protestantism have for many years been warning against the assumption that Protestantism is somehow *the* American religion and that Catholics and Jews are not quite in the club. But it takes time for popular sentiment to catch up with intellectual perception, and Catholics of my generation still feel the heavy hand of Protestant “purity” upon us in many areas of American life.

We still feel, too, the sharp cut of anti-Catholicism, even when it is “civilized,” patronizing and well-meant. I would not trouble the reader by pointing to the more primitive expressions of anti-Catholicism that still exist in our land and are reflected in some popular Protestant journalism—and also in some recent Gallup polls. This does not bother me or, I think, most Catholics. It is vestigial; it is almost—but not quite—dead. What does bother me a good deal is the challenge, still given us, to “prove” our Americanism, and we hear this challenge even at “advanced” inter-faith gatherings. I, for one, am very tired of explaining that, no, I *really* feel no conflict between my Americanism and my Catholicism. The day is rapidly coming—I think it has come for me—when American Catholics will refuse to answer such challenges, no matter how well they are meant, and will return them for the insults they are.

What I hope for in American Protestantism is that it continue to move in the direction it is now moving—away from sectarianism, from a narrow moralism and an obsessive anti-Catholicism—toward re-emphasis on those things that are great and profound in its own tradition. I hope it will worry less about “Rome” and about such, in my view, inane issues as an ambassador to the Vatican, and more about the real danger it faces in making too cozy an alliance with the forces of American secularism. I hope Protestantism deepens its own best heritage: that its renewed concern for the Church and the Sacraments, for Christian unity and ecumenical encounter are the signs of its future. I hope that both Catholics and Protestants will increasingly realize that we have much to learn from each other. Because, though the achievement of Christian unity must wait upon God’s good time, we are all, even now, baptized in the same Christ.

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BOOKS

THE ONGOING CONVERSATION

The following notes are offered for the guidance of those who wish to do further reading in the area of Protestant-Roman Catholic relations. The list is suggestive, not complete, and is limited to very recent writing.

R. M. B.

Sociological analyses. Herberg W., *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Doubleday)—Probably the best introduction to the interrelationship of the three groups in the American "triple melting-pot." Underwood, K., *Protestant and Catholic* (Beacon)—A full treatment by a Protestant of Catholic-Protestant tensions and rivalries in a Massachusetts city. Kane, J., *Catholic-Protestant Conflicts in America* (Regnery)—An analysis by a Catholic sociologist of some of the specific issues over which the two groups have clashed. O'Dea, T., *American Catholic Dilemma* (Sheed and Ward)—A very helpful analysis by a Catholic of issues facing American Catholics, and very good reading for Protestants.

Catholic appraisals of Protestantism. Tavard, G., *The Catholic Approach to Protestantism* (Harper's)—One of the first and most significant attempts in America to engage in a discussion of Protestantism from a Catholic point of view. Weigel, G., *Faith and Understanding in America* (Macmillan)—A continuation of this examination in a series of independent essays. Bouyer, L., *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism* (Newman)—A full treatment of the theology of Protestantism, attempting from a Catholic perspective to see what is right and wrong. Appraisals of the Protestant ecumenical movement are contained in Duff, E., *The Social Thought of the World Council of Churches* (Association Press), Weigel, *A Catholic Primer on the Ecumenical Movement* (Newman) and Thiels, G., *Histoire doctrinale du Mouvement Oecuménique* (Louvain). Fr. Weigel has also written a 58-page pamphlet, *A Survey of Protestant Theology in Our Day* (Newman).

Protestant appraisals of Catholicism. One of the best and fairest theological appraisals is K. E. Skydagaard's *One in Christ* (Muhlenberg), which treats both similarities and differences. Stuber, S., *Primer on Roman Catholicism for Protestants* (Association Press) outlines the various Catholic doctrines and indicates the Protestant alternatives. One Catholic journal recommended this book to priests engaged in "conversion work"—a tribute to its fairness. Hudson, W., *Understanding Roman Catholi-*

cism (Westminster) has generous quotations from recent papal pronouncements together with a Protestant evaluation. The Dutch theologian, G. C. Berkouwer, has a large book, *The Conflict with Rome* (Presbyterian and Reformed) and a small book, *Recent Developments in Roman Catholic Thought* (Eerdmans), both of which offer a theological critique from a very conservative Protestant viewpoint.

The current "dialogue." A series of studies by the Fund for the Republic deals with various dimensions of religion in a pluralistic society. Two pamphlets have appeared: "Religion and the Free Society" and "Religion and the Schools." Single copies are available free from The Fund for the Republic, 60 E. 42nd St., N.Y. 17, N.Y. *Religion in America* (Meridian), edited by John Cogley, is a stimulating volume of essays from a Fund-sponsored seminar. The 1954 symposium compiled by the editors of *The Commonwealth, Catholicism in America* (Harcourt Brace), is still one of the best pictures of a self-critical Catholicism. Walter Ong, in *Frontiers in American Catholicism* and *American Catholic Crossroads* (both Macmillan), gives helpful analyses of currents in contemporary Catholicism. Clyde, W., *Interpreting Protestantism to Catholics* (Westminster)—A straightforward statement of Protestant belief and practice as contrasted to Catholic counterparts.

In *American Catholics as Others See Them* (Sheed and Ward), a Catholic-initiated symposium, edited by Philip Scharper and to be published next fall, six non-Catholics give unfettered and candid appraisals of American Catholicism along with a Roman Catholic response.

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